

# New York Theaters and Their Attractions

## After Farrar, Perhaps Garden Will Try Acting in a Play

Actors With Song and Without It—Critic's Comment on Criticism and the Latest French Theater Plans.

By LAWRENCE REAMER.

GERALDINE FARRAR is fortunate to be able once she has ceased to sing to begin a career on the dramatic stage. Of her talents for such a venture there can be no doubt. She is one of the finest examples of the rare histrionic skill which has for several years found a home only on the operatic stage. Theodore Chaliapin is another great actor who is also a singer. Mary Garden poses eloquently in certain plays, perhaps more eloquently and skillfully than any of her associates. Probably she will soon feel as Miss Farrar does that even any pretense of being a singer in opera will have to come to an end.

Would such highly colored and grandiose acting as Chaliapin reveals in "Boris Godunov" be tolerated on the speaking stage today? This is an age of realism. Frank Craven goes about as far in the direction of the grand style as present day commentators on the drama will tolerate. Anything else is artificial and old fashioned. It makes no difference if an actor is playing *Macbeth* or *Hamlet*. He must act these roles to-day in the manner of contemporaneous realism or be declared a mouthing old rafter. Any indication of imagination, fervor or poetic interpretation marks him as an old stager. Of course there would be no place for Chaliapin where such standards of acting prevail.

But his superb performance of the conscience stricken pretender stirred the thousands who heard it at the Metropolitan Opera House with the accompaniment of illustrative music and the pageantry of scenery and chorus. Miss Farrar's *Carmen*, while superbly dramatic, is on a less lofty scale. Her performance of *Zaza* is not inferior to any witnessed here, and if such a sentimental and hysterical heroine would be tolerated on the speaking stage to-day her success in a similar work would be as great as her predecessors ever enjoyed.

Certainly there should be another opportunity for her to reveal the pathos and girlish tragedy of *Cio-Cio-San*. There are three years yet to come, however, before Miss Farrar ceases to sing. Both she and Mr. Belasco, who is to guide her footsteps in their new path, are experienced enough to know that many things may happen before that time.

When Miss Garden decides that she has had enough of opera and will devote her talents to the speaking theater the end of the voiceless prima donnas will have arrived. Miss Garden with her statuesque poses and her classical grace of movement will find the task of stepping over to the drama more difficult. She has already played some of the roles in which Sarah Bernhardt found success. Indeed Victorien Sardou wrote them for her. Both *Glismonda* and *Cleopatra*, which Miss Garden embodied with the aid of music, are figures in the Sardou gallery designed to show the genius of Mme. Bernhardt.

Miss Garden, however, had the assistance of an orchestra and a chorus to help her impart the full impression of these plays, which were called operatic even when the Divine Sarah first acted them. In Masterlinck's "Monna Vanna" Miss Garden also impersonated a notable dramatic character. Undeniably every one of these dramas is made vastly more acceptable by the music which accompanies them.

Then both Miss Farrar and Miss Garden have acted and sung *Tosca*. It is doubtful if the Sardou repertoire, however, could be restored to favor to-day by the most popular players. Marie Lohr's attempt with "Fedora" proved what a task would fall to any pulmotor who sought to breathe the breath of life into that work again. Miss Garden has indicated no intention of retiring even for a short time from the operatic stage.

Doubtless there will be no difficulty in finding further means of exploiting these popular personalities when the time comes. Miss Farrar in all her twenty years of opera never approached a character without adding to it from her own talents as an actress some individual note however stale and hackneyed the role might be. There is no reason to believe that she will have any more difficulty in brightening dramatic characters she may undertake in just the same manner. Then what a tower of strength she will have in David Belasco!

### The Insistent French Theater.

Another effort to maintain a French theater in New York calls attention to the sincerity of this struggle or less constant struggle which has never yet met with any promise of success. Yet the scheme has been in the metropolitan air for years. The Fourteenth Street Theater years ago was built for this purpose.

Half a century ago the bee had begun to buzz in some theater managers' bonnet. Years later Charles Frohman discussed the scheme seriously. Then there were the futile efforts of the late Lucien Bonheur, which finally found a more or less permanent home in the Garrick Theater. Last Tuesday night a new enterprise started up the same effort. If M. Chautau's players meet with encouragement they will return next season for a longer stay.

None was ever so dignified nor artistic as the Theater of Old Dovecot, which Jacques Copeau tried to transfer from Paris to West Thirty-fifth street. His scheme was somewhat too revolutionary for a strange country. His ideas had not even found general acceptance in Paris. A missionary theater ought to be more academic in character. The experiment cost a fortune, and M. Copeau, once the war was over, took his actors back to France. Then came a brief and more or less unanimous effort in the Belmont Theater, which is the scene of the latest experiment in this same desirable direction. Time, as the villains used to say when there were villainies in plays, time alone can tell how the experiment will turn out.

There is nothing revolutionary about this direction, to judge from the safety of sailing a play by Bernstein for the opening. The question of repertoire is always one of the most perplexing to a director of a foreign theater here.

The French stage has been drawn on with unusual generosity by New York managers this year. Sacha Guitry, Andre Plourd, Alfred Savoir and other new writers have come to the front there who seem able to supply the kind of dramas that the American public will take an interest in.

But these dramas are usually sold

to our managers and the authors cannot keep them back for the sake of a theater that will act them in the original tongue. Doubtless most of them are better in that form. Only a small public, however, can enjoy them, and in that fact probably lies the explanation as to why a French theater cannot be founded here.

### Describes the Real Critic.

A. B. Walkley has the following sage observations in a recent article on criticism:

"I think it is not unfair to presume that the professional critic has at least something of the critical temperament or he would not be where he is; and the true critical temperament includes the sense that one must enjoy, experience, understand, absorb the thing under criticism, as a necessary preliminary to applying principles and judging it. It is the irresponsible amateur who is the least ready to postpone or relinquish his egoism for the necessary stage of receptivity, who is the more intent on having opinions at once, who thinks he cannot afford to wait and see."

"I know, at any rate, that it is so in the theater. I have more than once be-

wailed the nuisance of the amateurs who rush up to one in the first interval with, 'Well, what do you think of it? Pretty poor stuff, eh?' The more knowing ones content themselves, as they pass you, with a raised eyebrow and a drop of the mouth.

"It is useless to tell them that I am just letting it happen to me and shall probably not begin to 'think' about it until I am in the taxi. And they would only put me down as an accomplished liar if I told them the whole monstrous truth; that, even in the taxi, a cigarette, the cool air of the night, the lights along the Embankment are still postponing opinions about the play."

"These, in fact, do not emerge, if they ever do emerge, until one's first slip of 'copy' is well under way. Meanwhile the amateur critics have already delivered themselves of definite opinions expressed with an emphasis that would frighten any editor in London out of his wits at the supper table or in the smoking room or on the top of the omnibus. It is, by the way, these amateur critics, not the professionals, whom the manager ought to fear. It is they, not the press, who make or mar the fortunes of a play."

### Attractions in the Brooklyn Theaters

The Selwyns will present Mrs. Olga Petrova in her own play, "The White Peacock," at the Majestic Theater this week. It was produced at the Comedy Theater, Manhattan, early this season, and has the original cast, including Louis Calhern, Robert Brister, Massinger Bellis, E. L. Fernandez, and Judson Langill.

Because of the big demand for seats Louis F. Werba has extended the run of "Lightnin'" with Milton Nobles and Miss Beanie Bacon, at the Montauk Theater, for two more weeks, at reduced prices.

"Shuffle Along," the negro musical melange, will be seen at Teller's Theater after a year's run at the Sixty-third Street Music Hall, Manhattan, a record for colored shows. Miller and Lyles, Sisle and Blake and the rest of the original company will appear in this spirited and diversified musical show.

Julian Eltinge returns to Eastern vaudeville at the Orpheum after an absence of a year. Others will be Miss Blossom Seeley, Winifred Clarke, Harry Johnson and Evian and Flint.

### 'Taking' Ways of Italian Beggar Surprises Actor

James Kirkwood says that it was a fascination for him during his stay in Italy with the George Fitzmaurice Company when they were filming the exterior of "The Man from Home" from the Booth Tarkington novel, "taking" ways of the Italian beggar. "In no country in the world has the art of begging reached a higher degree of virtuosity than in Italy," says the actor. "The professional mendicant breaks in upon meditations in the churches of Rome, boards the sleeping car and makes a systematic visit of every compartment in quest of back-sheesh."

Kirkwood claims to have discovered the prince of beggars in a certain blind man who does a flourishing business on the road from Naples to Sorrento. "The deprivation of one sense seems to have sharpened all his other faculties to uncanny acuteness. Not a passer by escapes him and he holds up every automobile that passes along the road. He stopped our car one morning and would you believe it, while he was invoking blessing on our heads and collecting the money with one hand, he had the other hand already outstretched ready for a car advancing from the opposite direction."



MISS MARGARET WYCHERLY in "WHAT THE PUBLIC WANTS" GARRICK

MISS MAY CORY KITCHEN in "THE BLUE KITTEN" EARL CARROLL THEATER

MISS VIOLET HEMING in "THE RUBICON" HUDSON

MISS EDDIE KING and DONALD FOSTER in "THANK-U" LONGACRE

MISS LILLY LUBBELL in "THE GREEN RING" NEIGHBORHOOD PLAYHOUSE

MISS CONSUELO FLOWERTON in "GOOD MORNING DEARIE" GLOBE

MISS MAIDE HARRIES in "MARJOLAINE" BROADHURST

BARNEY BERNARD, MISS ADELE ROLLAND and LOUIS KIMBALL in "PARTNERS AGAIN" SELWYN THEATER

MISS VIOLET HEMING in "THE RUBICON" HUDSON

MISS LILLY LUBBELL in "THE GREEN RING" NEIGHBORHOOD PLAYHOUSE

MISS MAIDE HARRIES in "MARJOLAINE" BROADHURST

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### LAST WEEK FOR "THANK-U"

John Golden announces that this will be the closing week of the Winchell Smith-Tom Cushing comedy, "Thank-U," at the Longacre Theater. The May Day performance will be the 250th consecutive time of the run in New York city and the play will have scored just thirty-one weeks when the curtain is rung down on the following Saturday night. Word has been received from Mr. Smith that he will arrive from his Mediterranean trip on the Homeric in time to be in at the finish.

### WARFIELD'S TOUR CLOSED.

David Warfield closed his long tour in David Belasco's play "The Return of Peter Grimm," in Akron, Ohio, last night after one of the most successful seasons he has had. Interest in the subject seemed much greater than when "Grimm" was new, as the play was ten years ahead of its time.

Mr. Belasco's belief in the theory of mental telepathy as revealed in "One," by Edward Knoblock, in which Miss Frances Starr appeared two years ago, is as strong as his belief in the subject of "Grimm." Later he will revive "One."

### Calendar of Theatrical First Nights

#### MONDAY.

**SELWYN THEATER**—The Selwyns will present Barney Bernard and Alexander Carr in "Partners Again," the latest Potash and Perlmutter comedy, by Montague Glass and Jules Eckert Goodman. This time they are in the automobile business. Many of the earlier characters and those who played them reappear. In the supporting company are Miss Adele Rolland, Miss Jennie Moscovitz, Lee Kohlmer and Louis Kimball.

**GARRICK THEATER**—"What the Public Wants," Arnold Bennett's comedy, will be the seventh production of the Theater Guild season. The cast includes Charles Dalton, Claude King, Moffatt Johnston, Malcolm Dunn, Louis Calvert, Miss Margaret Wycherly, Miss Jane Wheatley and Miss Shirley King. Mr. Calvert did the staging and Lee Simonson the setting.

**BELMONT THEATER**—The French Players will make their second production with "Le Retour," a comedy drama by Robert de Fiers and Francis de Croisset. This will be the final week. Besides the director, M. Schauten, the cast will include Mme. Ditz, Robert Fleury and M. Vallee.

#### TUESDAY.

**GREENWICH VILLAGE THEATER**—"Creditors," by Strindberg, postponed from last week, will be presented by Miss Ellen Van Volkenburg and Maurice Brown. With Reginald Pole, they will be the only players in the cast. The play will be given for seven performances only. As a curtain raiser, St. John Hanken's comedy, "The Constant Lover" will be played by Miss Janet Young and Charles Webster.

### Freedley Deserted Law For Career on Stage

Vinton Freedley, the leading man in "For Goodness Sake" at the Lyric Theater, is a Harvard man, and after his graduation studied law at the University of Pennsylvania. Instead of practicing, however, he adopted a stage career, and his experience in the theatrical world has been varied. He has been seen in several metropolitan hits, and was also identified with the Toy Theater at Boston and the Little Theater at Philadelphia. One of his early engagements was with Miss Grace George in "L'Elevation," after which he was with Lou Tellegen in "Blind Youth." He was prominent in "Come on Charlie" at the Forty-eighth Street Theater, and was also seen in "Miss Millions" at the Punch and Judy Theater. Then came "Dere Mabel" and "Oul Madame," after which he succeeded the late Clifford Crawford in "My Lady Friends." This was succeeded by engagements in "Made to Love," "Dangerous Maid" and "Town Gossip."

It will be seen that Freedley has played mostly in musical comedy, his work as a singer and dancer making him a valuable acquisition in that form of entertainment.

### 'Chuckles of 1922' Opens At Columbia To-morrow

The all summer production at the Columbia Theater will open to-morrow afternoon, when Jean Bedini will present Clark and McCullough in "Chuckles of 1922." It is announced as an extravaganza and vaudeville performance, the word burlesque being absent. The extravaganza is in two acts and fifteen scenes, and employs a long cast of fun-makers, singers and dancers, who will appear in short comedy bits.

Mr. Bedini, by his "Peek-a-Boo" production of two summers ago, demonstrated skill in arranging an attractive entertainment of this character. In addition to Clark and McCullough, those who will participate are Misses Emily Earle, Ruth Wheeler and Elaine Beaton; Charlie Mack, the White Way Trio, the Saxophone Four, the Six English Steppers, a troupe of dancing girls from the London music halls, and the Wheeler Trio, comedy acrobats. The policy of giving two performances daily will be maintained.

### Summer Stock Company Opens To-morrow Night

The first summer stock organization to begin production around New York will be the Keith Alhambra Players, who will open to-morrow evening at B. F. Keith's Alhambra Theater with "Comedians' Scandal." The Keith vaudeville circuit before the war conducted a dozen stock companies in New York and other cities during the summer season. In war time vaudeville was continued through the summer and stock was crowded out.

The Keith Alhambra Players are headed by Miss Dorothy Shoemaker and Dwight A. Munda. Both have had wide experience on the legitimate stage, including roles in Broadway hits. The other members of the company are Miss Virginia Springer, second lead; Miss Rose Ludwig, ingenue; Huston Richards, juvenile; Joseph Lawrence, character man, and William Webb, stage director. A number of well known players have registered with the company for "jobbing" in plays that call for a large cast.

The Keith Alhambra Players, it is announced, will produce high royalty hits with Broadway runs behind them. There will be stock matinees Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Saturday. Sundays will be given over to matinee and night concerts.



MISS IRENE BORDONI in "THE FRENCH DOLL" LYCEUM

### Did You Hear?

About the German Dialect, the Star Who Took a Cut and Co-operatives Companies?

#### By LUCIEN CLEVES.

WHO would have thought that Joseph Cawthorn has made a study of the historical development of German dialect? He has, however, and if one observes closely his way of making fun in "The Blue Kitten" now it is at the Earl Carroll Theater it will add to the humor he always creates.

"When I was a child actor," Mr. Cawthorn said the other day to the reporter for THE NEW YORK HERALD, "the majority of German comedians of the day believed that the more they murdered the King's English the better would their audiences be amused. You would hear lines like this, for instance, 'I walk me down the street out, smoking my pipe yet already vonce,' and the public was expected to laugh itself to death."

"There were a few exceptions, such as George S. Knight and Gus Williams. I imitated Williams when I was a child performer, and used indeed to be billed as 'the pocket edition of Gus Williams.'"

"Dialects changed in those days as quickly as women's fashions and one had to keep up with them or be hopelessly lost in the shuffle. In the early 80s German comedians always said 'knicker' for knuckles, 'stomach' for stomach and 'kiffin' for coughing. I think this dialect was introduced by Lessinger of Moor and Lessinger, then a well known team. Then came the German dialect with the admixture of Yiddish which Weber and Fields used for so many years. This style had a long period of popularity. It was of course subject to almost infinite variations."

"I came to the conclusion from observation that a straight German dialect with an occasional misplaced word, got as much laughter and applause as any of the others. It was a decided advantage moreover in putting over a gag or a subtle point that would be spoiled by mixing up the words too much. So I adopted that kind of a dialect and stuck to it."

"Even the make-up changed with the dialect. We used to redden our noses with Chinese vermilion and line our faces with India ink. I never remember to have seen in those days a well-blended make-up. When the hair got matted I could take it out and pull the lumps apart. The great disadvantage was that I could not keep the hair from working into the skin, which was rather unpleasant while acting before an audience."

"Then we had to wear clogs. Well do I remember when Gus Williams, the foremost German monologue man of his day, came on the stage wearing patent leather shoes. We thought he had gone crazy for discarding clogs. Others said he merely had the big head. We all agreed that it would kill his act, but he had as much success as ever, and after awhile we all followed his example. And then came one other thing. It was always 'Dutch' in the old days. We never called it 'German.'"

**Official Commonweal.**  
Productions on the commonwealth plan have hitherto been arranged by actors or have, after the first week has shown but dubious success, been suggested by the managers unwilling to assume too uncertain an enterprise. Such has been the manner in which most of the cooperative or commonwealth organizations came into existence during the season.

But two managers have recently organized productions on that plan at the outset. They are willing to take the responsibility at this uncertain theatrical time. Are you willing to go into the scheme and take what comes? Are you willing to forego all regular salary but a minimum sum paid weekly—this is usually \$25—and wait for your profit on what comes in? These are the questions asked of the actors. Usually there must be an affirmative reply, since the two men who have organized companies on this basis had little difficulty in finding just the actors they wanted for the parts.

"What the effect on the actor in the future will be," one of the best known of them said the other day, "it is not possible to foresee. It may open the managers altogether. If they find they are able to get actors without guaranteeing them a certain comfortable sum, they will be inclined hereafter to organize all their companies on such a basis. There are always actors out of employ-

Continued on Following Page.



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